

House Passes Final Higher Education Act Increasing Pell Grant to \$8000, Includes Edwards Amendment to Lower College Tuition for Military Children

(Washington, DC)— U.S. Representative Chet Edwards (TX17) announced the U.S. House has passed H.R. 4137, the Higher Education Act conference report, which reauthorizes several college student financial aid programs, and increases the maximum Pell grant award to \$8,000 from \$5,800. The bill passed by a strong bipartisan majority 380 to 49.

“With tuition rates skyrocketing, lower and middle income students and their families are struggling to afford college,” said Edwards. “This bill helps hard-working students pursue their dream of a college education by increasing maximum Pell grant awards to \$8,000.”

Edwards successfully added an amendment to the Higher Education Act to help lower the burden of college tuition for children of military families. Edwards’ amendment makes in-state tuition rates at public universities for military children mandatory if their parents were stationed in that state when the child started college. Currently, many states do not allow in-state tuition rates for military children when their parents are re-stationed elsewhere after they start college. Texas already grants in-state tuition rates, but 25 states do not.

“Granting military children the ability to pay in-state tuition rates throughout the country means many will no longer have to give up their education goals when their parents’ military orders come in,” said Edwards. “Part of keeping our promise to our service men and women is making sure that their children are not penalized because their parents have answered their country’s call to serve.”

Five states do not give military families in-state tuition rates even when the service member is stationed there: MI, SD, MA, IN, VT. Seventeen states force military children to pay out of state tuition when their parents are re-stationed to another state: AR, CA, DE, HI, ME, MN, MS, MO, MT, NE, NH, NY, ND, PA, RI, SC, WI. Edwards’ amendment is strongly supported by the American Legion, National Military Families Association (NMFA), Military Child Education Coalition, Association of the United States Army (AUSA), and the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA).

The Senate also passed the conference report Higher Education Act and send it to the president for his signature. The legislation builds on the successful efforts to make college more affordable and accessible for all qualified students. Last year, Congress enacted into law a \$20 billion increase in college financial aid over the next five years, the largest increase in student aid since the G.I. Bill of 1944. The Higher Education Act (HEA) was originally signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, and is intended to help students from low and middle-income families afford a college education.